

# EL CLARIN

ASPIRA, INC. OF NEW JERSEY  
UPDATE

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SUMMER EDITION

## SECOND ANNUAL LATINO EDUCATION CONFERENCE A GREAT SUCCESS!

Over 400 persons, over two days, attended the Second Annual Latino Education Conference at Resorts Hotel in Atlantic City, New Jersey on the dates of April 3-4, 2000.

Representatives from 19 public school districts in New Jersey and delegations from New York, Philadelphia and as far as Denver, Colorado partook on a most dynamic and challenging event. In addition to school teachers, administrators and school board members, over 100 parents and 25 students participated in the general sessions and workshops.

The conference, co-sponsored by the Educational Testing Service and Panasonic Corporation, was very well received by those in attendance. Commissioner of Education David Hespe was the keynote Luncheon speaker on Monday, April 3<sup>rd</sup> and Dr. Carlos Rodriguez made the keynote presentation on Tuesday. Dr. Rodriguez' challenging presentation led to the planning of another conference on Latino higher education achievement.

"We are elated by the response from the school districts and the parents. The Conference has grown this year and it simply means that next year will be even better" explained Dr. Mercedes Del Valle-Rana, Conference Chair.

Of special significance was the fact that the two morning master of ceremonies, Dr. Grisel López-Díaz, Assistant Superintendent of Schools in Jersey City and Ms. Lydia Silva, Assistant Superintendent of Schools in Newark, are both Aspirantes.

Accolades must go to Ms. Carmen Torres-Izquierdo, as Conference Coordinator and her conference "troops" which includes Olga Montero, Anita González and Miguel Meléndez as "captains".

## ASPIRA RECEIVES \$825,000 GRANT FROM US DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION FOR TECHNOLOGY CENTERS

The U.S. Department of Education recently announced a grant in the amount of \$825,000 over three years for ASPIRA, Inc. of New Jersey to establish five (5) Community Technology Centers in New Jersey.

The technology centers will offer computer classes and internet access free of charge to each community where the centers are located. ASPIRA plans to operate the CTC at its centers in Jersey City, Newark, Trenton, Perth Amboy and Camden.

"We are very pleased that we won this grant in national competition" said Dr. Luis Salgado, Chair of the Board of Directors Program Committee. "It shows that our programs are indeed superb and very much needed by our community."

The grant covers a three year period commencing in May, 2000.

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE...

- ANNUAL LUNCHEON
- ASPIRA OPENS CRYSTAL ROOM
- OPENINGS IN VINELAND, ATLANTIC CITY, ETC...
- BABYLAND TO OPERATE CHILD CARE CENTER
- \$75,000 GRANT FOR MATH & SCIENCE ACADEMIES
- WELCOME TO NEW STAFF MEMBERS
- GRANT IN N. BRUNSWICK FOR SCHOOL VIOLENCE PREVENTION PROGRAM
- UPCOMING EVENTS
- SATURDAY MAS ACADEMY OPENING IN NEWARK AND PERTH AMBOY

HISPANIC COLLEGE FAIRS REPEAT SUCCESSES

# ASPIRA, Inc of New Jersey

## OVER 300 AT 23RD ANNUAL LUNCHEON

More than 300 ASPIRA supporters and friends joined to celebrate ASPIRA's 23<sup>rd</sup> Annual Luncheon on March 9<sup>th</sup> at the Holiday Inn North in Newark.

It was a very special occasion as two of ASPIRA's Founders were honored for their foresight and vision. In attendance to receive their emoluments and recognition: Percy Miranda and Gloria Del Toro.

In addition, ASPIRA honored Ms. Melissa Miranda as "Aspirante of the Year", and Ms. Tamara Morales, Corporate Supporter of First Union National Bank.

It was a very festive occasion with entertainment provided by Trio Crystal. A great job once again by Doña Carmen Nazario and the staff. Congratulations!

### ASPIRA OPENS CRYSTAL ROOM

**ASPIRA** staff is very happy these days as the renovation of the basement level at **ASPIRA** head quarters is almost ready.

During the past months, two activities were undertaken at the room, which accommodates a maximum of 140 persons: the **ASPIRA** Clubs dance and the end-of-the-year party for **ASPIRA** staff.

"We are planning a number of activities at the Crystal Room, including the Café Teatro, the Awards Night Ceremony and various fundraisers", explained Ms. Carmen Torres-Izquierdo, North Regional Director. "In addition, we now can revive the **ASPIRA** Dance Troupé, and other performing arts projects since now we have the space," concluded Ms. Torres.

ASPIRA OPENINGS IN VINELAND, ATLANTIC CITY,  
NEW BRUNSWICK, PASSAIC AND PERTH AMBOY

More than 500 new Aspirantes were added in 1999 as the result of the new **ASPIRA** Clubs opened in five new urban centers.

These openings were possible thanks to a grant from First Union Regional Foundation. "The openings are a total success", commented Anibal Ramos, Board of Directors' Chair.

"We are now getting very active support in some of these areas, and there is no doubt we will surpass our goals during 2000", added Mr. Ramos. The new grant will also expand the services of the **ASPIRA** Parents for Educational Excellence Program (APEX) to more than 500 parents.

The grant from First Union Regional Foundation is a "challenge" grant as **ASPIRA** must obtain full financial support to keep the centers opened in the new locations by the second year of operations. "So far, so good" added Mr. Ramos.



## BABYLAND TO OPERATE AND MANAGE CHILD CARE CENTER

**ASPIRA has reached an agreement with Babyland Family Services, Inc. to develop, operate and manage the child care center planned for the first floor of the ASPIR building.**

Babyland is an experienced operator of early childhood education centers in Newark with an outstanding reputation for excellence. Babyland has also a long standing relationship with the Newark Public Schools, operating pre-school centers for the school system.

"This relationship with Babyland assures that our building continues to be a viable structure with programs directed at our community," explained Dr. Mercedes Del Valle-Rana, Chair of the Development Committee of the Board of Directors.

"We are extremely pleased that we have such a fine partner in this endeavor; our children deserve the best," concluded Dr. Del Valle-Rana.

## ASPIRA RECEIVES \$75,000 GRANT FOR MATH AND SCIENCE ACADEMIES FROM NEWARK SCHOOL DISTRICT

Thanks to the initiative of Newark's new School Superintendent, Ms. Marion Bolden, ASPIRA has opened two more math and science academies at Gladys Hillman Jones Model Middle School and Luis Muñoz Main.

This is the first time a local school district funds the MAS Academy at the local level. "We are extremely grateful to Ms. Marion Bolden for her foresight and her understanding of the mission of the academies. All educational research on the subject shows that children who do well in math and science also do well in all their other subjects", expressed William Colon, ASPIRA's President and CEO. "We want to be able to offer these academies in all districts where we operate other programs, we just need more support as has been shown by Ms. Bolden" added Mr. Colon.

The Math and Science Academies funded by the district and the United Way in Newark are after-school programs that operate two days a week during the academic year with a comprehensive summer project.

## SATURDAY MAS ACADEMY OPENS IN NEWARK AND PERTH AMBOY CENTER TO OFFER SATURDAY MAS AS WELL

As a result of the College Board's report entitled "Reaching the Top" and its call for intensive mathematics and science tutoring for minority children and the espousal of the concept of "affirmative development", ASPIRA is now offering Saturday Math and Science Academies at its center in Newark and, shortly, in Perth Amboy.

"There is no doubt that this type of intervention does make a difference in future academic success", stated Dr. Mercedes Del Valle-Rana, Board of Directors member and Chair of the Development Committee. "The research shows that these kinds of tutorial programs, at an early age, produce incremental increases in academic achievement". Parents are urged to call Sabrina Rosado, Program Coordinator, at (973) 484-7554. The sessions operate every Saturday from 9:00 AM to 1:00 PM. There is a basic fee of \$10.00 per session.

## ***HISPANIC COLLEGE FAIRS REPEAT LAST YEAR'S SUCCESS***

For a second year in a row, ASPIRA counselors were busy during the month of December, doing the extra work needed to conduct the second year of ASPIRA-sponsored college fairs in New Jersey.

The college fairs were conducted December 15<sup>th</sup> and December 16<sup>th</sup> at Union County College in Cranford, for the northern area of the state and at Burlington County College for seniors of the southern and central areas of the state.

The fair at Union County College attracted a record 71 colleges and universities and over 2,000 students in attendance. The fair at Burlington County College had 54 colleges and over 2,500 students.

The Hispanic College fairs are an ASPIRA initiative, which raises funds for the organization's various activities. ASPIRA's partner in this venture is the National Hispanic College Fairs, Inc., a private organization which has more than 20 years of experience in managing and operating college fairs and college tours.

**ASPIRA, Inc. of New Jersey** is a non-profit organization providing counseling and leadership development programs to Latino and other minority youth. Our programs include personal and educational counseling, dropout prevention, leadership development and post-secondary placement.

**EL CLARIN** is an ASPIRA publication designed to inform the community of our programs and other issues of importance. For more information on ASPIRA or to receive EL CLARIN, you can write or call our executive office:

*Executive Office*  
390 Broad Street, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor  
**Newark, NJ 07104**  
(973) 484-7554

Office Hours: 9:00am – 5:00pm  
Monday through Friday

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## WELCOME TO NEW STAFF MEMBERS

**Awilda Del Valle – Vineland**  
**Alba Mota – New Brunswick**  
**Diana R. Martínez – Trenton**

**Priscilla DeCos – Passaic**  
**Taisha Colón – Trenton**  
**Debra Sosa – Vineland**

## NEW GRANT IN NEW BRUNSWICK FOR SCHOOL VIOLENCE PREVENTION

A grant in the amount of \$63,000 has been awarded to ASPIRA by the Middlesex County Department of Human Services to establish a "School Violence Prevention Program" at the Redshaw School in New Brunswick.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

- August 11, 2000-Dinner Dance at Shannon's , Atco, NJ
- August 26, 2000-Chinese Auction at North Ward Center
- September 24,2000-Second Annual Grand Dominoes Tournament

**ASPIRA, INC. OF NEW JERSEY**  
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